

MAKING TRACKS



BIG BUTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1998 ISSUE

BUTTE FALLS:

A History of Its City Government Since Incorporation in 1911

by Vernon L. Arnold (May, 1960)

The following information was compiled from a paper prepared by Vernon Arnold for a class entitled History of the Pacific N.W. for Dr. F. Haines. Vernon Arnold is Chairman of the Southern Oregon Historical Society and spent many years in Butte Falls. He is a cousin to Ed and his brother, Harold Arnold.

"Before 1911 and its incorporation, the Town of Butte Falls was considered a booming industrial area with a very prosperous future." What follows is a historical account of city government and the formation of the Town Charter from 1911 through its first 50 years. The purpose of this article is to help us better understand the development of the town with regard to our city government.

Prior to incorporation, the Butte Falls Sugar Pine Company

was built at the falls in 1906. However, the following year, the company declared bankruptcy. Before the demise of the company, the Sugar Pine Company gave the people the land which is now Butte Falls. Shortly following, a man named Bert Harris mapped out the town, with a park in the center, patterned after his hometown in Harvard, Illinois. It is this "Town Square" appearance that gives the town its character and feeling of community and unity - residents and visitors alike enjoy even today.

It was Mr. Harris who helped with the building of the grade school in 1908. Two years later the Pacific and Eastern Railroad was completed. Regular passenger service was offered from 1912 to 1916. Other important events prior to the town's incorporation in 1911, include the chartering of Pine

(continued on page 2)



Some things never change. Pictured here is the Butte Falls High School looking as stately then, as it does today. In August of 1923, the town borrowed money to gravel streets and crosswalks around town.

Butte Falls (continued)

Belt Banking Company in 1907 and the building of the U.S. Hotel.

With the Butte Falls Lumber Company in operation at the falls, and booming business and construction taking place, the town's folk decided to incorporate in 1911. A committee of five drew up their intentions and submitted them to the people. Although the people favored incorporation, the Butte Falls Lumber Company did not. Their opposition was based on fear of increased taxes. The committee and lumber company fought their case in court. The committee won and the town was incorporated in August, 1911.

Soon following, the people elected E.E. Smith, owner of the General Store, and father of Ernest W. Smith, as its first mayor. Edgar E. Smith was also the town treasurer. The town selected a recorder and six councilmen and held their first meeting at the barber shop on August 11, 1911.

By November, 1911, with help from the town's attorney, Porter Neff, the charter was presented to the voters. It passed 35 to 5. Much of the duties outlined in the charter remain in effect to this day, with some minor changes. The last official designated in the town charter is the appointment of the Town Marshall whose duties include acting as Sergeant of Arms, if necessary, at the council meetings.

When the council needed an ordinance, they immediately had the city attorney draft the necessary papers. The council voted on it in three readings in one evening, with a fifteen minute break between meetings. Normally, the ordinance was read and voted on at three consecutive meetings. Then the proposed ordinance was submitted to the mayor for his signature or vetoed within a five-day limit.

Ordinances were passed for many reasons. Here are just a few: Restricting cattle and chickens from running at large; posting speed limits; and borrowing money with bonds. The Town Ordinance #48 made it unlawful to drive certain stock and vehicles upon or across walks in Butte Falls.

In addition to the mayor and council, six important committees were formed which include 1) Street and alley, 2) Water and fire, 3) Finance, 4) Sidewalk, 5) Sanitation, and 6) Park and Cemetery. The purpose of all the committees is to improve the town.

Important Dates of Significant Ordinances and Decisions:

***May 13, 1922** - Council gave permission to county to build a road through town.

***August 14, 1923** - City borrowed money to gravel streets and crosswalks.

***1911-1912** - Water and fire committee were responsible for getting water rights. Beating their rivals by only two hours.

***May 27, 1912** - Council started planned water work system and paid \$9,417 to complete it in 120 days. The first water rate was \$.75 per month.

***May 9, 1928** - Town decided to furnish water for the high school swimming pool for \$200 a year. Plan failed to materialize.

***October 7, 1912** - Council decided to establish fire protection by purchasing a hose, a hose cart, and two nozzles.

***April 23, 1929** - A new fire siren was purchased.

***March 25, 1937** - A new and better fire hose was purchased.

***January 22, 1948** - \$1,200 was appropriated to buy a fire truck from the City of Medford.

***November 19, 1923** - It was voted to raise tax levy from 20 to 35 mills to help pay for town buildings, such as the new city hall.

***February 26, 1920** - Council decided to stop all public gatherings and quarantine the town due to flu epidemic.

***November 6, 1916** - Town received deed for the cemetery property which was owned by F.G. Owen.

***September 7, 1914** - Geo W. Barker was given a warrant for \$666.66 to construct the jail house.

***In 1939**, a fence was built around the town to prevent cattle and other livestock from running at large in the town.

***October 23, 1911** - Telephone and telegraph line granted by council.

***May 26, 1919** - Discussion to run a bus line between Medford and Butte Falls.

***October 26, 1920** - Library board was established.

***March 27, 1947** - First curfew. Children under 18 years of age were to be off streets by 9:30 p.m.

***May 18, 1942** - Town established rules for air raid warnings.

***In 1928**, the town decided to put in electric lights after the school decided to get electricity from the mill at the falls.

The following is a reprint from the Mail Tribune, May 1, 1998, 60 years ago today . . . Butte Falls will have a special cachet for the cancellation of airmail during National Airmail Week, May 15-21. The cachet will show Mt. McLoughlin towering above the Cascade timberland and will carry the legend "Butte Falls, Heart of the Cascade Timberland." Leola Stoddard is the Butte Falls postmistress. (1938).

BOARD MEMBERS

Cory Hamann (President)
Bev Carrillo

Dan Murphy
Joyce Hailicka, Chairman

THE BILL EDMONDSON MEMORIAL MUSEUM AND CABOOSE HOURS
FRIDAY 1- 4 P.M., SATURDAY 10 - 4 P.M. AND SUNDAY 1-4 P.M.

HOSTESS: KAETE THOMPSON 865-3333
NELLIE RAGSDALE 865-3332

*Big Butte Historical Society
Overview for 1998*

June/July - Restoration of EW Smith's Workshop; Children's Garden; Program for children sponsored by SOHS "Early Days of Logging". Through September county-wide quilt shows and fairs. Feature local hand-make quilts at museum.

August - Summer newsletter deadline August 14, 1998. 2nd Anniversary and Open House featuring workshop restoration of EW Smith's shop.

September - Cycle OR returns to Butte Falls September 14-15, 1998. Theme: "It's A Wonderful Life — Welcome Back" 1940's.

October - Fall newsletter deadline October 16, 1998.

*There have been angels in my life.
While they haven't arrived
with a blast of trumpets or a rustle of wings,
I've known them just the same.
They performed their acts in human guise,
sometimes borrowing the faces
of family and friends,
sometimes posing as
well-meaning strangers.
You have known them, too,
when just the right word was needed,
when a tiny act of kindness
made a great difference.*

ALARIE TENNILLE

*If we all discovered that we had
only five minutes left to say all that we
wanted to say, every telephone booth
would be occupied by people
calling other people to tell them
that they loved them.*

Christopher Morley

IF YOU WERE BORN BEFORE 1945. . .

You were born before television, penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, plastic, contact lenses, and Frisbees; before panty hose, dishwashers, clothes dryers, electric blankets, air conditioners, and before man walked on the moon.

In our time, closets were for clothes - not for "coming out of." Bunnies were small rabbits, and rabbits were not Volkswagens. Designer Jeans were scheming girls named Jean or Jeanne, and having a meaningful relationship meant getting along well with our cousins.

We thought fast food was what you ate during Lent. Cigarette smoking was fashionable, grass was mowed, coke was a cold drink, and pot was something you cooked in. Rock music was a Grandma's lullaby, and Ba-a-a-d really was bad.

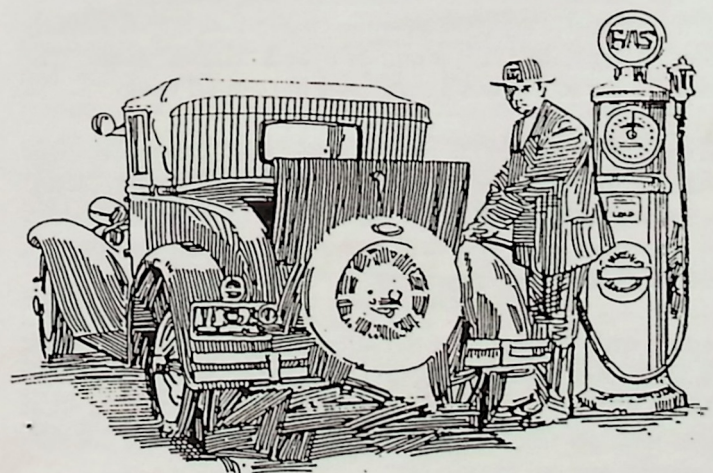
Remember the five and dime stores where you bought things for five and ten cents. For one nickel you could ride a street car, make a phone call, buy a Pepsi or enough stamps to mail one letter and two postcards. You could buy a new Chevy Coup for \$600, but who could afford one; a pity, too, because gas was 11 cents a gallon!

In 1940, "made in Japan" meant junk and the term "making out" referred to how you did on your exam. Pizzas, "McDonalds", Sushi and instant coffee were unheard of.

We got married first and then lived together. We were before house-husbands, computer dating, dual careers, and commuter marriages. We were before day-care centers, group therapy and stress management. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, CD players, computers, artificial hearts, frozen yogurt, and guys wearing earrings. For us, time-sharing meant togetherness - not computers or condominiums; a "chip" meant a piece of wood; a mouse was a rodent; hardware meant hardware; and software wasn't even a word.

Consider the changes we have witnessed and survived. What a great reason to celebrate!

Anonymous



BONNET-MAKING TURNS INTO MEMORABLE DAY FOR ALL AT MUSEUM

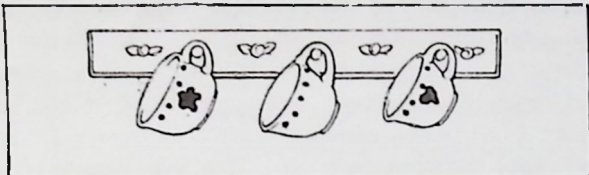
Nine-year old, Kylie Hayes, and a dozen lovely young ladies were guests for a special program where they learned about the history of hats and each made and wore their own bonnet. Girls were provided with various styles of hats, ribbons, laces, and flowers and were asked to design an Easter bonnet.

A luncheon was served by Cory Hamann and the girls enjoyed tea, sandwiches, and dessert. We learned that hats go back to "the caveman days". Classical music played in the background while the girls crafted their hats, ate lunch, and visited with each other.

After lunch, they listened to the children's classic story, THE VELVETEEN RABBIT, read by Joyce Hailicka. From the story, we learned "If you love something enough, it becomes real..." After the story was over, a name was drawn and Kylie Hayes received a fluffy, velveteen rabbit stuffed animal.

Pictures were taken of all of the young ladies in their hats. Each returned in May, where they received a beautiful, handcrafted mother's day card designed by Nellie Ann Ragsdale.

A special thanks to our photographers Cory Hamann and Linda Matthews.



Pictured is 9 year old, Kylie Hayes, who participated with 12 other young ladies making their own hat designs. Kylie has lived in Butte Falls most of her life and enjoys the "quiet" town she lives in more than city life. Kylie was born in Medford, Oregon.

Cycle Oregon Returns September 14-15, 1998

For the third time since 1994, Cycle Oregon returns to Butte Falls. Over the next four months, community coordinators and volunteers will meet to plan this wonderful event. And what will we call it? "It's a Wonderful Life, Welcome Back". Taking our theme from the all-time classic 1946 movie starring Jimmy Stewart, the event promises to be a "classic" event. The setting for the movie was a little town of Bedford Falls.

The basic values of the "It's a Wonderful Life" theme are: Love of hard work. Love of community. Love of country. Cycle Oregon will bring over 2,000 riders from all over the country plus a support team who will bring all the food and prepare meals in their kitchen on wheels.

Keeping with the theme of the 40's, Butte Falls will have the look and feel of the era. Classic vintage cars, window displays, fashions of the 40's, big band era music, and a cast of local talent will set the stage for an enjoyable event for the community and our visitors.



It's a Wonderful Life

WITH THANKS AND APPRECIATION

Since the last edition of "Making Tracks", we have received so many wonderful comments from people like you who have found the historical society newsletter informative and enjoyable. We love hearing from you.

At this point in time, there are four board members with over one hundred members. When it's time to get things done, we are convinced there is more energy, passion, and spirit within us than in the largest of corporations.

Each of our members and volunteers has something unique to offer and has a wide range of skills and talents. We would just like you to know that you are appreciated in more ways than we can say. Thank you for your continued effort and support. We hope that the newsletter will continue to stir thoughts and memories within you. And if you have a story or thoughts to share, contact Joyce Hailicka at 865-3205.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FROM

THE CHAIRMAN

By Joyce Hailicka

Planning for the future is something historical societies are getting very good at. Over the past several months the Southern Oregon Historical Society and the smaller historical societies throughout the county have been working together to form the Jackson County Museums Association.

With the focus on SOHS's strategic plan, the smaller societies will have more and better opportunities for improving their services by working cooperatively with SOHS. This is a welcomed and unprecedented shift in thinking, thanks to the leadership of Brad Linder, director of SOHS. Many new ideas and concepts emerged from a strategic planning process which included staff, trustees, and community representatives providing valuable input.

We are fortunate to have Marjorie Edens and Vern Arnold attending regular meetings of the Big Butte Historical. Thank you for your encouragement and commitment to the smaller historical societies.

I would like to thank **Cory Hamann** for providing a great deal of help to the historical society. As president and treasurer, Cory is always on time to meet deadlines on all reporting necessary from the historical society. Her interest, enthusiasm, and help with meetings and projects, has made this an enjoyable undertaking for the rest of us. **Kaete Thompson** and **Nellie Ann Ragsdale** have been instrumental in keeping the museums interesting to visit and open to the public. **Bev Carillo**, thanks for all the great desserts you provide for us so generously and your continued involvement through the years.

Dan Murphy, we're lucky to have "a man around the house" who helps in any way needed.

To each of our volunteers - - - we thank you all. And a special thanks to **Gloria and Russ Karches** for keeping the yard and garden looking so nice. The "Children's Garden" is so special. **Arlan Ragsdale**, thanks for filling in at the museum whenever we need you.

Tracy Willis, thank you very much for the beautiful, large original oil painting of early logging. The picture hangs in the Butte Falls Community Hall where it can be enjoyed by all. It came from the Medco office, originally and was purchased and then donated to Butte Falls.

Dean Higinbotham, thank you for sharing your early recollections of Butte Falls with the members and guests at the April Historical Society meeting. We learned a lot and we have a lot more to learn from you. A special thanks for the 1910 photo of the Butte Falls baseball team taken when they played Ashland.

We are grateful to the **Southern Oregon Historical Society** for the Burroughs Posting Machine which was removed from the Headquarters of Medford Corporation in 1997. The machine was in the attic at Medite and was not in use. The machine was used to post double entry accounts. **Vern Arnold**, Chairman of SOHS, gave **Kaete Thompson** a demonstration. Stop by the Caboose Museum and ask Kaete to show you how it works.

Cher Rydberg, thanks for taking an entire afternoon to interview **Charles McCabe** for BBHS. We look forward to transcribing and sharing some of his early recollections with our readers in the future.

Thanks to all who wrote letters of support for the Historical Society. The budget was approved for 1999. A special thanks to **Scott Benninghof**, the principal at the elementary school and his staff, for the following letter. An excerpt of the letter reads:

Fine Folk

"As educators, history and what we learn from it, is the basis of education. Not only is the history of our country seen through a textbook, but also through the personal perspective of people from our area. Children need to understand their own community in order to build their knowledge base for bigger and better concepts. What better place than in your own community to have access to these historical records! For a small and relatively remote area in Southern Oregon, Butte Falls is fortunate to have local community members helping our children learn and experience their ancestry."

Thank you Scott and the staff of Butte Falls Elementary School. We couldn't have said it better ourselves.

If you made a contribution of time or materials to the museum since our last newsletter, please let us know. We don't want to forget anyone. Every person is important to us.

Early History of Butte Falls Prior to Incorporation

by Charlene Brown

Mount McLoughlin, the 9,500 foot peak towering to the southeast, was known to settlers as Snowy Butte. The two main streams, rising from this mountain were called Big Butte Creek and Little Butte Creek. The area became known as Big Butte Country to early settlers.

By the 1850's, the primary route from Jacksonville to Fort Klamath led through the region via Rancheria. Hunters and trappers began to explore the area from settlements in the Rogue and Bear Creek Valleys.

Early settlers came to the Big Butte Country during the 1860's and established camps to cut sugar pine shakes, cedar posts and cord wood for sale in the valley. The roads were seasonal and hauling was by ox or horse team.

These early settlers filed homestead claims for 160 acres of timberland. They built rustic cabins and planted gardens to "prove up" on their claims.

On May 9, 1878, the first post office was established for the Big Butte Country Homesteads and small sawmills continued to dot the area during the 1880's. By 1910, the number of families warranted establishment of several one-room schools throughout the area.

Big Bend Milling Company built a sawmill at the falls on Big Butte Creek in 1904. A dam was built and water power was used to run the mill. This mill was soon replaced by a larger mill known as the Butte Falls Sugar Pine Company. Bert Harris was the first boss of the new company. In the fall of 1905, Mr. Harris plotted a street grid for a town on the bluff west of the sawmill. The town covered fifty-five acres, and was laid out with a 300 square foot plaza surrounded by both family dwelling lots and business lots. This layout was patterned after that of Harvard, Illinois, the hometown of one of the early residents.

*"A friend may well be
reckoned with a masterpiece
of nature."*

—George Eliot

Because of the falls on Big Butte Creek, the town was named Butte Falls. On January 22, 1906, a dedication ceremony was held and papers were entered into Jackson County records.

The Pacific and Eastern railroad from Medford was completed and the first train arrived on November 15, 1910. The first excursion train arrived in Butte Falls on April 4, 1911, carrying dignitaries and tourists.

For several years, tourists traveled to Butte Falls to enjoy the clean mountain air and get away from the sweltering heat of the valley. Business thrived and two luxury hotels were built.

While passenger and freight service continued for many years, the chief benefit of the railroad was the opening up of timbered areas east of Butte Falls.



PLEASE JOIN US!

MAIL TO:

Big Butte Historical Society
P. O. Box 379, Butte Falls, OR 97522

Now that you heard about BBHS, why not get to
know us even better by becoming a volunteer!
We'll look forward to having you join us!

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Here's how I can be of help:

_____ I'd like to _____

_____ Tell me more about being a board member.

_____ I could be a guest speaker. My topic: _____

_____ I'd like to help with fundraising efforts.

_____ I do not have time to volunteer at this time but I
would like to make a monetary contribution to this
organization.

KID'S PAGE !!!

Contributors: Megan Holmes, Victoria Lawrence, Sterling White, Stratton White and Ian Rydberg

How the Juniper Died by Megan L. Holmes - 7th grade

One day in 1946, in a late and dry summer in the town of Pocatello, Idaho, a young boy named Don Holmes was smoking a cigarette by a Juniper tree on Johnny Creek Road. He tried to hide his cigarette. After he was done, he buried it under some of the needles of the Juniper tree. When he was walking down the road, he looked around and saw a column of smoke. The Juniper was on fire!!

He ran and grabbed a shovel and kept the fire from spreading to the barn and a year supply of hay.

The moral of this story is that when you hide things that are dangerous, you will be caught. Do you think he was? His heart pounded as he heard the fire truck siren.

How a Spanking Turned into Laughter by Victoria P. Lawrence - 5th grade

One spring afternoon in 1961, William Lawrence got into some mischief. He was playing outside when his mother called him inside. "Will, come her right now!" He could tell by the sound of her voice that he was in trouble. When he got inside she said to him, "You are getting a spanking young man." She went to get the spanking paddle, but he would not sit still. He was running around the house with his mother chasing him with the paddle. Suddenly the telephone rang. While she was on the phone he stuck a book down his pants. So, after she got off the phone he marched up to her and as she was going to spank him, she started laughing and couldn't spank him.

NOSE GRINDING FOOTBALL by Sterling White

In the old days, football was a very rough game. The players wore very little padding. It was literally nose to nose football. My great grandfather, Carl White, played football for Medford High School in 1925. He played end. He told my dad that after a game, he would be covered with bruises and scrapes.



Hurt, Guard.
White, End.

19

THE CRATER

25



Demmer kicking out of danger, Alumni game.

Here's a picture of my great grandfather in his uniform. And him playing. (Notice Roxy Ann Mountain in the background.)

*I wonder what it would be like to live in a world
where it was always June.*

--L. M. MONTGOMERY

KID'S PAGE !!!

Helping Your Child Learn History By Robert Weiss

The Oasis of Memory

From the introduction of a booklet by Elaine Wrisley Reed, comes the following idea: "Imagine waking up one morning to find out that you have no memory! You are not able to remember who you are or what happened in your life. You are unable to tell your children from total strangers. You cannot communicate with people because you no longer know how to greet them, or understand their conversation.

Lack of historical memory is parallel to this loss of individual memory. The link on which we depend every day between the past and present would be lost if we had no memory of our history.

As parents, we can prepare our children to achieve the lifelong task of finding their place in history by helping them to learn what shaped the world into which they were born. Without information about their history, children don't "get" a lot of what they hear and see around them."

GRANDPA REMEMBERS by Ian Rydberg - 4th Grade

Back in the early 30's, when my Grandpa, Stanton Stram, was a young boy living in Idaho, he remembers having an unexpected holiday from school. One winter there was a heavy snowfall. The snow was perfect for making snowballs. On Sunday night, some adventurous young lads made giant snowballs and rolled them onto the school porches, blocking the doorways into the school. Then they took water and threw it on the snowballs causing them to freeze into a solid chunk of ice. It took the janitor two full days to chip away the ice to get the doors open!!

Hmmm, I wonder what their punishment was????



MY GREAT GRANDFATHER by Stratton White

In 1924, my great grandfather, Carl White, was on the Medford High School basketball team. That year they were Oregon State champions. If my great grandfather was alive today, he would be amazed at how basketball stars, like Michael Jordan, play today. When my dad was a kid, my great grandfather told him that he would dribble down the court, the center would bend over and he would run up the center's back and shoot. What a difference from today.



Back row L to R 1. ? 2. Albert Allen 3. ? 4. Coach Callison
Front row L to R 1. Tulley Williams. 2. Carl (Red) White 3. Mervyn Chastain 4. Gilbert Knips